

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

SEPTEMBER 1976

10p

VOL. 5. NO. 9

THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

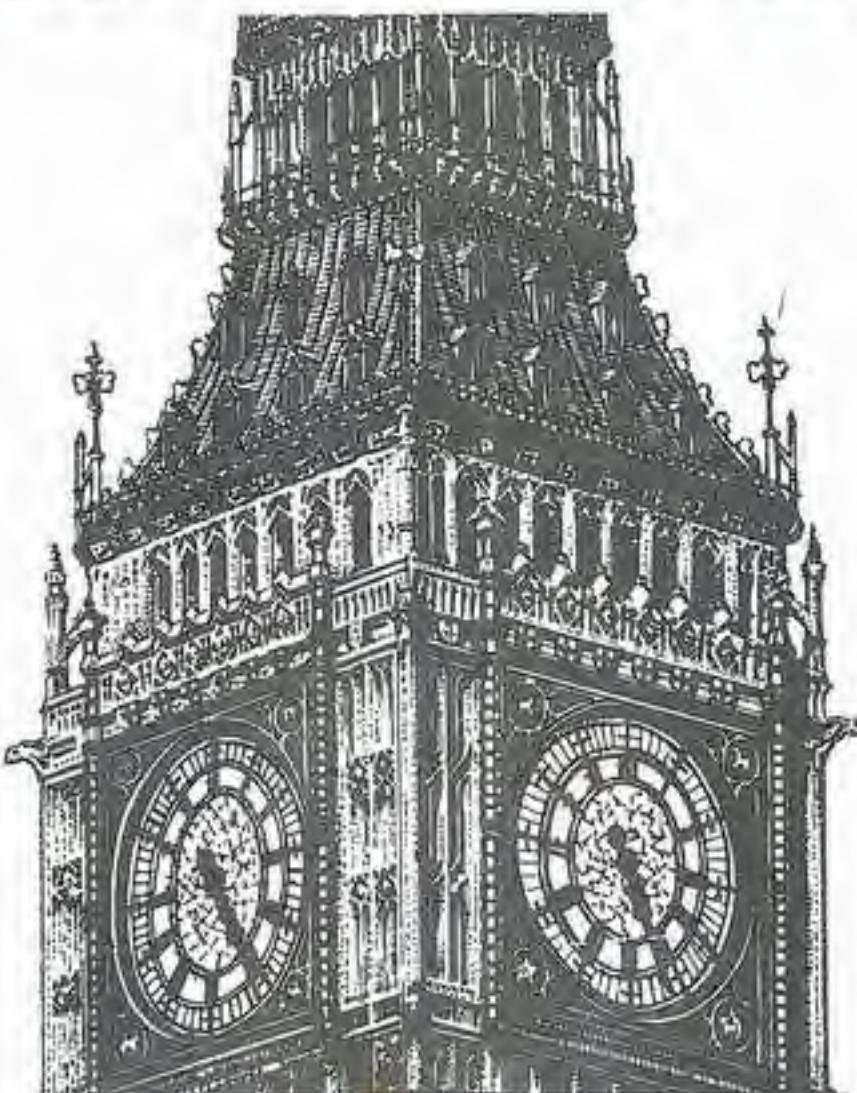
'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . . James Connolly

The Fourth Siege of Limerick



ARTHUR'S QUAY

LONDON LETTER



Dr. Newman's Directives



THE WEST'S A WAKE

AT LEAST 60,000 of the 80,000 boys and girls who took their Intermediate and Leaving Certificate examinations this Summer are now unemployed; so are about 10,000 graduates of universities and schools of higher education. They are, of course, in addition to the 110,000 or so *ordinary* unemployed. All apparently are unwanted by the society that has nurtured them. Next year it will be as bad, or worse.

The Registrar-General's demographic projection for next year is that the Republic will have 330,000 children between the ages of 0-4 years. Not only is there no room for them in the class-rooms — classes round Dublin at any rate are an unmanageable 40 — there are not even enough primary school BUILDINGS to house them. The educational cutbacks, moreover, have ensured that even if you had the buildings, you would not have sufficient teachers, primary or secondary. If Mr. Richard Burke, T.D., the Minister for Education, has a plan, even a projection of a plan, to deal with the imminent chaos, he has kept it to himself. Yet, he aligned himself and voted with Mr. Cosgrave and the cohorts of Fianna Fail to defeat a mild measure that would allow the dissemination of Family Planning facilities that might ensure a less grim future for the growing population of the 26 Counties.

Our bishops, and especially Dr. Newman, have condemned all forms of Family Planning as sinful. They do not, for one reason or another, tell the people that artificial birth control can be adopted by Catholic couples when its use means choosing the lesser of two evils and that this is the current attitude of the French bishops. The Pope has never condemned the French bishops or any other hierarchy for taking such a stand. Surely in the case of Irishwomen, in this crisis of jobs and education alone, not having more children than they want is the lesser evil?

Irish bishops, led by Archbishop McEvilly, joined the French bishops in opposing the dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope at the First Vatican Council in 1870: they could do worse than join the French bishops today when the prospect facing Ireland is of hundreds of thousands of unwanted children. Especially as most of the children who cannot get jobs will be from poor and unlettered homes: they will not have been taught to comfort themselves in their enforced idleness with the pleasures of reading or music.

At the higher levels, graduates with good degrees in the sciences, arts and economics are offering themselves to Dublin office and banking managers as accounts clerks, dead-end jobs that require only a mechanical skill. It is ironic that all our best brains can hope for is a revival in the British economy so that they can get jobs in industry there. But Britain will have her own unemployed school-leavers to cater for and, on the basis of the latest advice by a group of independent experts on manpower to the Common Market Commission, the unemployment prospects are grisly. Where Britain is concerned, the experts envisage a vast programme of re-training and a shift to what the economists call "knowledge-based industries" where factors like design would play a major part and, as regards the rest of the Common Market, the gritty, repetitive jobs are to be left to the underdeveloped countries — like Ireland. A generation ago George Orwell wrote "Down and Out in Paris and London"; today he could well be writing "Down and Out in Paris, London, Rome, Brussels, Bonn and Dublin".

In the past year, many parents have begun to suspect that they have been conned, that their children are not getting and are not going to get the start in life to which they are entitled, or to which they feel they are entitled. The whole aim of education in Ireland has been the passing of examinations or the acquiring of degrees of one sort or another so that Johnny will have a profession or at least some clean-collar job, preferably with a Cortina thrown in. Work on the farm, work at a bench, sweep the streets? Not on your nelly; their Johnny is too good for that, that's for other people: the dull, dirty and less rewarding jobs are always for others! But the purpose of education is simply to be educated. I don't envy any one his

BY Dermot McEvoy

money, his Jag, his boutique-shopping wife, his assiduity at chasing a golf ball or doubling three-no-trumps, but I do envy a man his education whether it is displayed as verbal agility or manual dexterity.

YOU WILL by now have been able to get a copy of Dr. Newman's 48-page booklet, "Pastoral Guidance for Marriage and Family Life", whose stated aim is to prepare young people for marriage. Where either party is under 18 years of age the date of the wedding may not be set until a diocesan team of two priests, a married man and a married woman from outside the parish will have reported. In the present economic climate the only advice to give 17-year-olds is Mr. Punch's Advice To Those About To Be Married: 'Don't'. Romeo, however, was only 14, and for youngsters who are intent on going ahead and who have not already anticipated marriage, as most young people do, they'd be better advised to see a Family Planning consultant. After all, it is the parents and the community, not Dr. Newman, who will have care of the children. On their honeymoon — if they can afford one — youthful prospective parents from Limerick could do worse than call on a French bishop, or write to the Redemptorist theologian, Father Bernard Haering, who favours birth control in his regular column in the popular Rome Catholic magazine, *Familia Cristiana*. Father Haering does not say contraception is good; he says, "It is always a disorder, but that disorder is not always a guilt". Ask your P.P. who's right.

ON MY WAY to West Clare recently my wife and I stayed at a Limerick hotel. A twin-bedded room with breakfast — it did not have a wash-hand basin — cost £12.50; a much larger and more comfortable room with w.h.b. and a much better and more varied breakfast cost £8.50 in a four-star hotel in Lahinch. And a steak from the Limerick hotel's deep-freeze cost £3.90! But then I expect the Limerick Establishment has it in for me — my room number was the sinister 303!

VISITORS to the Merriman School in Ennis were being shown round the town as I passed Bindon Street. Their guided tour would have brought them past the Manchester Martyrs' memorial on which my maternal grandfather's name, Patrick McInerney, chairman of the Board of Guardians and the memorial committee, is inscribed. Next to it is the River Fergus where Father Dan Meehan (no, he wasn't a priest; he was called 'father' because his only suit was black) and I used to catch unwary trout and watch millions of silvery elvers on the last lap of their journey from the Saragasso Sea. Salmon too used to jump the weir. Today, there is scarcely a fish in the river, just weeds, untreated sewage and effluent from a whiting 'factory'; the flour mills that Bannatyne's of Limerick had on the other side of the river have long since been idle, or in the sad phrase of the Rate Books: 'Mill (at rest)'. Similarly, since we got self-government, there is no stream of carters taking coal, salt, guano from the port of Clarecastle to Dan McInerney's just over the Fergus. The County Club is shut too: have we run out of gentry as well?

It must be a victory of some kind that we have revived Merriman. The de Valera Government, which banned his "Midnight Court" as indecent, is no longer in charge (I trust that the Irish Literary luminaries who graced the Festival explained *that* to the visitors; it cannot have been easy). In my own view the only interest in Merriman, Joyce, Yeats is commercial and touristy; the run of the mill Ennis trader, Christian Brothers' and St. Flannan's 'educated', cares little and knows less about our cultural heritage, Irish or

Anglo-Irish. If there's money in it, he's for it. It is the same sort of attitude that used to support the teaching of the Irish language. You learned the language to get the job and then forgot all about it. In Ennis, and that's the Fior-Gaeltacht for you, the only Irish phrase I heard was my own, derisory "Bail ó Dhia ar an obair" when I stuck my head into a crowded pub near O'Connell Square. The pint is the culture, all of it.

* * * * *

LIMERICK families did not as a rule favour Lahinch when I was a lad; they swamped Kilkee; it was more the *bon ton*. The Irwins, the jewellers, were an exception (I'm glad to see the family name over the shop still in Limerick) and I had a youthful crush on one of the girls, above my station as usual! They used to stay at Linnane's, later the Claremont and now,

WHAT IS YOUR T.D. DOING?

Under the heading, 'Harsh choices ahead for the Irish economy', David Blake in the *London Times Business News* describes Ireland as having "the sickest economy in Europe". He envisages spending cuts soon which will slice savagely into social expenditure of all kinds and emigration inevitably emerging again "as the only safety value available". He says: "Few look on this prospect, which will almost certainly involve the young people leaving home, with any joy but even fewer see real hope that it can be avoided altogether".

sadly, closed down; at the Aberdeen Arms, one dressed for dinner and the proprietors, the Misses Kerin, were extremely fussy about who they'd have as guests. Now, even I can get in and sit down to Inagh salmon — without a collar and tie. While the whirligig of time brings its revenges, there are snags even in Paradise: one has to mix with farmers, supporters of Fianna Fail and 'executives' who talk of nothing save how well or how badly they belted a white pill round the links in the blazing heat. The gin and lime is the culture here, all of it.

I looked in once at the Television Room to see Nodlaig McCarthy's chat with Conor Cruise O'Brien. He did not say anything new; it was bland stuff; it had to be because Miss McCarthy was maladroit in her questioning and, obviously, had not prepared her material as she should have; to get at any nuggets, face-to-face interviews have to be researched and the subject must not be allowed to wriggle off the hook until temper shows, then the interviewer moves on . . . and lets the viewers judge how the encounter went. As it turned out, the interview was a good advertisement for Conor Cruise O'Brien. Apparently, he believes in a life force, just like Bernard Shaw, and is not quite as nutty as Teilhard De Chardin with his noosphere. And you can call it God if you like, he said. At any rate that's the impression I got.

* * * * *

MOTOR CARS packed the promenade at Lahinch. Mostly farmers and their families were the owners of the by no means cheap models. There are excellent car parks round the town but they are not used. Some enterprising visitors brought cylinders of Calor gas and rigged up cooking jets and grills in the car boots. The place stank. Transistors blared all along the shingle. Every few minutes a loudspeaker invited the owner of car number so and so to remove it as he was blocking the exit of other cars. Empty Coca Cola and Fanta cans littered the sands. Waste paper was everywhere. A couple of power boats polluted the bay just outside the bathers. Elsewhere, the pubs were packed and the pint, I noticed, was 2p and 3p dearer than in central Dublin bars. No attendants were on duty to stop the cars entering the promenade; no one was there to pick up the litter. The bank strike seemed to have hit no one; fivers and tenners were being thrown around like snuff at a wake.

Over the cliffs and along the sand dunes to Liscannor caravans and trailers littered the landscape (what most of the owners do about sanitation I leave you to guess). Where are the poor? There aren't any, certainly not among the farmers and their relatives. Mind you, I did not see anyone there from Ennis, any members of what one would call the working-class. Perhaps they were too busy working, too busy paying the Income Tax of the new rich.

An East Limerick farmer I met at the Aberdeen Arms told me he was quite happy about this year's prices. He'd stop the dole; "make 'em all work"; he was in dry stock; no, he did not have any tillage. How about potatoes, other vegetables? Aye-yah, he left that to others. I did see one tilled field — somewhere outside Ballyvaughan; I almost cheered. Who was the lunatic? But, soon, those ginned-up farmers will be keening.

* * * * *

INVESTIGATIVE journalism, like literacy, has little place in Irish newspapers. A pity really when there are so many abuses worthy of the attention of probing minds. The *Sunday World* did well to track down Mr. Matt Cannon, the Dublin electrical trader whose family companies have crashed owing £500,000. It found him soaking up the sun beside the swimming pool of El Arroyo, his £100,000 villa near Torremolinos on the Costa del Sol and promising to come home "to sort things out" for his staff and his creditors. No one can say when, or indeed if, Mr. Cannon will come home. But the question that Peter O'Neill, of the *Sunday World*, omitted to ask Mr. Cannon (even a refusal to answer would be newsworthy) is simple: "How did you take the money to Spain to buy the villa — in a suitcase?"

For the benefit of readers of the *Limerick Socialist* whose knowledge of foreign currency regulations will at best be confined to collecting a few thousand pesetas for a package tour on the Costa Brava, no one, but no one, is allowed to take money out of Ireland to buy property or shares without the authority of the Minister of Finance. Exchange Control Regulations, designed to save foreign currency, are absolutely rigid. Perhaps one of the Limerick T.D.s, unless, of course, Mr. Cannon is a subscriber to his party's funds, will put down a question for Mr. Richie Ryan to answer? Perhaps Mr. Cannon will favour us with an explanation? Or if not us, perhaps he'll tell the liquidator of the Cannon family group of companies?

* * * * *

THE IMPUDENCE of the Provos and their supporters becomes more revolting. Their latest ploy is to blame British troops for the slaughter of the three Maguire children who were crushed to death by a careering car hijacked by the Provos. It seems the troops, having been fired on, were wrongheaded enough to fire back at the car in which their presumed assailants were fleeing, kill the driver and cause the car to slew into the children. But soldiers have a habit of firing back when fired on, a fact which cannot be unknown even to the Provos. It won't wash. It's a wonder the Provos don't blame the little children just for being there.

* * * * *

I HAVE no time, as you all know, for any shade of Republican not even for "an Irish dimensionalist"; I regard these 26 Counties as more than enough forces to handle now or in the foreseeable future. But I protest at the sordid sniping by Steve Coughlan at Rose Dugdale because she is allowed to play an innocuous form of tennis inside the walls of Limerick jail. One is sent to prison as a punishment, not for punishment: Rose Dugdale is entitled to bask balls round a tennis court in normal exercise the same as anyone else; Coughlan, apparently, cannot be stopped from talking them. Which is a pity.

* * * * *

"HAVE YOU heard the latest Kerry joke?" — "The Bishop of Galway".

PART
TWENYBY
P.J. RYAN

THE STRAND BARRACKS

The Strand Barracks is a grey limestone building, two storeys high. It is located on the County Clare bank of the Shannon, midway between the Thomond and Sarsfield bridges. It was built in 1774 as a "House of Industry", wherein crafts were taught. Years later it was acquired by the British Military authorities and used as a barracks for the defence of the two bridges. It formed a bridgehead into County Clare so that the Army forces would not have to battle their way into the Banner County. The barracks could comfortably contain two companies of infantry and a whole battalion in an emergency.

The barracks is a rectangle measuring about 47 yds. on the front facing the river. It is 116 yds. in depth. The outer walls form part of the dormitories, storerooms, etc. within. Inside is a "square" overlooked by all the windows within the barracks. Entry and exit from the barracks was by the front gate only.

From these details it can be seen that the Strand Barracks was an ideal building, well situated for its purpose — the defence of Thomond and Sarsfield bridges.

Before the arrival of the Big Gun, there were sixty-five men in the barracks. Due to their commendable initiative in stockpiling, they had ample supplies of food and ammunition. They were cut off and isolated from the other three barracks. They could not emerge on the Strand road in front of the barracks. They could hear and enjoy the sound of the flowing river, over Curragour Falls, but they dare not attempt to look at it. They had made an opening in the wall of a room at the back of the barracks and so had the liberty of all the surrounding country at the back of the building.

There they could stroll in the open, bask in the sunlight and commune with Nature. They could if they so desired arrive on the Ennis Road and disperse around County Clare. The more active amongst them could take a brisk walk towards the Clare hills or Cappanty Mor, a few miles distant and return by the Cratloe Woods and the Ennis Road in time for dinner. The only compulsion in their lives was the call of the cook to dinner. Breakfast in the Strand Barracks was a standard affair of tea, bread and butter, with a boiled or fried egg, according to taste. This was followed by the cigarette and the long cup of tea. Cigarettes were plentiful.

Dinner was the big event of the day and was looked forward to with curiosity and speculation amongst the garrison. It was like asking, "What would you like for Christmas"? The replies gave scope for wit and wisdom. On Monday, the dinner might consist of best Limerick bacon, with potatoes and cabbage; on Tuesday, it could be potatoes, bacon and cabbage. Everything depended on the sequence in which the items were served. Should a successful foray in the countryside produce a straying bullock or a witless sheep or lamb, then the menu varied. The order of precedence was, first come, first served. Because of these things a continuing interest in dinner was maintained.

On the morning of Thursday, 20th July, all of the men were up and around by ten o'clock. The sparkling flow of the Shannon at Curragour Falls was music in their ears. The occasional rifle fire of the Staters reminded them that they were not in this world for easy living and slothful rest. The bullets falling like isolated drops of rain before a thunderstorm pointed the moral: Into each life some rain must fall. Blissfully happy and unconcerned, they were unaware of the coming downpour.

THE ATTACK

The first shell had cut the telegraph pole, struck the side of the window and finished its career near the Treaty Stone before the sound of the explosion from the gun reached their

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ears. They were untutored and uninformed in the ways of shellfire, yet an infallible instinct informed them that this was IT — THE GUN.

Those who were near the barracks basking in the morning sun felt the call of the wild open spaces. They were near, and wished that they were distant. Those who were distant from the barracks increased the distance.

Never did the hills of Clare and Cappanty Mor look so beautiful and so distant. Far off Cratloe Woods was like a mother calling her wayward children home. In times of stress and deep travail, mother knows best. The first shell shook their courage; with the second it surely broke down.

The fear and terror of the unknown may have urged some speed, but the sight of the Staters compelled speed. Fifty men from Cleeves factory led by Captain Hessian gave "God speed" to their movements. The Galwayman, an ex-officer of the Connacht Rangers, who had resigned his commission following the execution of the two mutineers in India in 1920, led the assault party. A Limerick man by choice, he had a pub in Nicholas Street.

As he and his men approached the back of the Strand Barracks, they were spread out at ten feet apart. They were fired upon. A slow cautious advance followed. It was during this advance and because of this, that THE GUN did not fire.

THE SURRENDER

Sixteen men were taken prisoner. Those men who were taken were brave and honourable men; having surrendered, they stood their ground and prepared to take the consequences of their actions. Had the Staters so desired they could have pursued and shot down some of those who had fled. They had not the inclination or the desire to do so; nor would their officer permit it. The policy of the Staters was to protect life and not indiscriminate slaughter.

A flour bag was thrown across a broom handle and pushed out of the top right hand window of the building. The Strand Barracks was taken by twelve midday on Thursday, 20th July, 1922. Of the sixteen men taken prisoner, one was a Clareman and the others were from Limerick City.

Flanked by twenty Staters, the prisoners were marched from the Strand across the Sarsfield Bridge to William Streets Barracks. It was a short and bitter journey, soured by the dreams of yesterday.

The Staters now had absolute control of the Clare bank of the Shannon, as well as control of the Thomond and Sarsfield bridges. The flour bag flag of surrender remained flying from the window until sunset, when it was taken in and held by Captain Hessian. He had this flag inscribed, *Strand Barrack Thursday, 20 July, 1922.*

A successful military commander does not pause to count his blessings one by one, but seeks to multiply them. Every little gain makes further gains possible. It was said of the Staters that they had been handed the Strand Barracks on a dinner plate by their fairy Godmother. Now that the Strand was safely in their possession, it lay with the Staters to confer with their fairy Godmother and discover which of the remaining three barracks they would take next.

THE CASTLE BARRACKS

The Castle Barracks invited inspection. It is built on an acre

of land on the "Island" on the south bank of the Shannon and is connected to the Clare side of the river by Thomond Bridge. It consists of five connected towers forming a right-angle covering the river. It was built in the 12th century. The red brick marks on the walls showed where cannon balls had scored hits in earlier sieges.

The Staters could bring THE GUN to the heights of Thomondgate, two hundred yards across the river from the Castle. By doing this, they could aim through the bore of THE GUN at the Castle without endangering any nearby houses. It is true that the Treaty Stone by Thomond Bridge might lie in the line of fire or be hit by accident, but it could be removed from its pedestal before firing started, like moving the furniture before polishing a floor. On this stone was signed the Treaty which followed the siege of 1691.

Here was seen the tragedy of the Civil War. Ireland's first National Army were fighting to enforce a treaty which once again the British would be happy to dishonour. Urged on by aliens, the Diehards were unwittingly playing into Britain's

hands. Britain still had enough troops in the country, ready to resume total occupation.

Should the Staters shell the Castle from the heights of Thomondgate, they would be following the precedent of earlier sieges. In the siege of 1691, the Williamite guns crossed the Shannon at a ford two hundred yards down river from the present Corbally Bridge. This was in August when the river was low. A small island of trees in the river marked the site of the ford.

There is a notable difference in mobility and firing power between a twentieth century field-gun and the blundering cannon of 1691. Sean McKeown's eighteen-pounder could reduce the Castle to rubble in a few hours. In doing this, the Staters would destroy a mother's blessing. They would destroy the city's most prized possession and be damned forever as vandals. They could ignore the tempting prestige of possession of the Castle, as a handful of men could contain the garrison until they died of old age or surrendered from sheer boredom.

(To be continued).

DEATH IN A PRISON CELL

He had only ever seen prisons from the outside . . . and one was Limerick Prison, with its guarded and flood-lit stone walls. Ironically, he was to die in a cell in that prison, "the first time he had ever been in trouble".

He had arrived at shortly before half past seven on the evening of Saturday 31st July. Inside the prison he was taken by the Reception Officer and they went through the routine filling in of official forms. Name, age, address, next of kin . . .

After a while they got talking. The middle-aged, well spoken and mild-mannered man. The officer was later to recall that the man seemed nervous and his hands were shaking. Still, he was co-operative and he seemed very respectful. "Thank you, Sir. Yes, Sir and No, Sir". They got talking and the man said he was in trouble over bounced cheques. He revealed that he was once a company director, "but all that is gone now".

He told of how he was going to Mount Mellery for "the cure" to end his alcoholism. He had visited a garda station and as a result of what he had told the sergeant there he had been sent to Limerick Prison.

The time for the talk was over. "Come on, we'll give you a bath and a meal". The man refused the meal. "Just a cup of tea. Thank you, Sir".

Meanwhile, his clothes were being searched by another prison officer. Part of the familiar routine. The officer felt down the top breast pocket of the man's jacket. Something nipped his finger. An unwrapped blade. The prison officer took out the blade and slotted it into the razor belonging to the prisoner.

The next morning a different prison officer was on duty. He took the prisoner from the Reception Wing across to the remand wing. The prisoner was dressed in the usual prison garb and carried the normal prison issue, towel, soap, sheets. He was given cell number four in "D" block. His razor was also handed over to another prison officer. He was not told that there were two blades inserted loosely in the razor.

A short time afterwards the prisoner was brought out for a shave. The officer gave him the the razor. The man shaved. The officer did not see him interfere with the razor. He received back the razor and he was satisfied that there was a blade in it.

Later, the Coroner would speculate that it was at this time that the man retained one blade. No one would ever really know for certain. It seemed that way.

After lunch the prisoner asked if he could stay in his cell during a recreation period. When he was given permission, he smiled and said, "Thank you, Sir".

At five minutes past four he was found sitting behind the cell door. There were five deep slashes across his left wrist. A blood-stained razor blade was found on a heating pipe near the

bed in the cell.

In the minutes around mid-night and in the artificial glare of the prison floodlights his body was taken from the cell and away in a Fire Brigade ambulance to Barrington's Hospital.

The Gardai took possession of the razor and blade, later to be produced at an inquest when the sad and private world of the prisoner would be torn open and exposed to the cold indifference of strangers.

His son said, "Let's call him self-employed". The prison officer said he had been a former company director. So the Coroner settled for that . . . it was neat. The prison officers came forward. They told their parts and gave their evidence. "The prisoner was a very polite man. He seemed normal to me. He impressed me. An exceptional type of man".

His journey to Mellery was recounted. His brush with the law. His comment, "It's all over now", was noted. His remark about going before the District Court was also recalled.

The silver razor was shown. A piece of paper with the prisoner's name on it. The blade was put back into a brown envelope. And looking on was the prisoner's wife. Now a widow.

The jury listened to the evidence. The Coroner told them they could add a rider if they so felt. They did not feel it was warranted. The man took his own life. That was their verdict.

Four officers had seen the prisoner. The third and fourth officers had not been told about the two blades. One of the blades caused the death of the prisoner in his cell. It did not seem important to the jury. The man had taken his own life. And that was that. To-night, the artificial glare will bathe the prison . . . and soon another prisoner will be in cell four on "D" block, Limerick Prison.

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LONDON LETTER

ARTHUR LA BERN

ALL OUR TOMORROWS

Really, these Italians! A City friend of mine was saying the other day as he sprinkled Tabasco on the first of the season's oysters, "They should be left to stew in their own spaghetti".

Those ungrateful wops are actually blocking a £20 million scheme by Imperial Chemical Industries in conjunction with an Italian firm to build a new chemical works in Sicily.

The lame excuse for the opposition is the Seveso disaster which is costing the Italian Government nearly £27 million on decontamination and rather more in human misery.

One is pleased to read that the Mother Church has not lost her head. Despite the possibility that pregnant women, affected by the escape of poisonous gas fumes, might give birth to hideously deformed babies, the local Bishop has sternly forbidden any abortions.

That's beside the point.

In any case, Seveso is north of Milan and a long way from Sicily. Moreover, I.C.I. and the Italian company have assured the locals that every possible safety precaution will be taken.

These Sicilian peasants remain unconvinced. Suspicious, like all peasants, they do not realise that Imperial Chemical Industries are really concerned for their welfare, prosperity and happiness.

It's the future of mankind that matters to I.C.I., not profits, Or, as I.C.I. put it, All Our Tomorrows.

I really do believe that the Sicilians prefer the Mafia to I.C.I. This is very silly of them because I have long held the view that the Mafia is a subsidy of I.C.I.

It isn't only the Sicilians who are dubious about Imperial Chemical Industries. I.C.I. has long been aware that its public image isn't exactly whiter than white.

So much so that space was taken in all the national newspapers recently to display a photograph of some remarkably healthy schoolboys playing football, watched by pretty girls during a break in lessons, the airy and sunlit school buildings in the background.

The very composition of the photograph reeked of advertising agency production. It was captioned: This year I.C.I. is investing £450m. For All Our Tomorrows.

I would have preferred to have seen a photograph illustrating one of I.C.I.'s actual £450 million activities undertaken for all our tomorrows instead of one showing kids kicking a ball about, a pastime youngsters indulged in centuries before I.C.I. was a gleam in Alfred Mond's eye.

A photograph, for instance, of the unfortunate beagles I.C.I. are using in their £5 million experiments on behalf of the tobacco companies aimed at finding a synthetic and safe smoke. These beagles are pinioned and forced to inhale smoke to the equivalent of up to a hundred cigarettes a day.

If experiments like this — and it is only one of thousands carried on animals in I.C.I. research stations — are necessary for All Our Tomorrows then I would prefer not to have a tomorrow, at least not an I.C.I. Tomorrow.

Six million experiments on animals are carried out by various research bodies in this country every year allegedly for All Our Tomorrows — and essentials like cosmetics.

We have Home Office inspectors visiting these research stations to report on any instances of cruelty that might be deemed not essential. The Home Office, under our humane Mr. Jenkins, has decided not to interfere in the matter of the I.C.I. beagles.

A society which permits the sort of experiments carried out

by I.C.I. on dumb animals has no right to any sort of Tomorrow.

I referred just now to Alfred Mond, later Lord Melchett. With Sir Harry McGowan he was a founder of I.C.I. Together they worked out the details on an Atlantic crossing on the old Aquitania. It involved the amalgamation of Brunner Mond, Nobel's Industries, the British Dyes Corporation and United Alkali. The stamp duty alone amounted to £1 million.

The German-born Mond wanted all his employees to join in the coming bonanza. He announced that all his workers could buy shares in Imperial Chemical Industries, the new giant combine, for 2s. 6d. less than the market price. As the average wage was rather less than £3 a week, it is understandable how it came about that hundreds of workers were maimed in the rush to buy I.C.I. shares.

Let us not detract from the glory that was Mond. Before the 1914-18 War Brunner, Mond & Co. manufactured soda crystals at Silvertown, North Woolwich, London.

When War was declared Brunner, Mond — quick as a flash, if the phrase is appropriate — turned to making TNT.

In those days there was no nonsense about having to give safety assurances for manufacturing high explosives in a densely populated area.

The subsequent Silvertown explosion killed and injured more Londoners than any single Zeppelin raid.

Alfred Mond was unstinting in the service of his adoptive country. Even though elocution lessons could never cure his guttural accent, he was a politician to be reckoned with, both as an MP and a Peer.

He was a stalwart of the Liberal Party and once gave Lloyd George some advice on how to handle those troublesome chaps, the workers.

'You are bound to do something fairly violent before you make them understand', he wrote. 'Working men, after all, are very much like children; they are impressed when they come up against somebody who knows his own mind and insists on having his own way'.

With Liberals like that the country really didn't need Tories.

If the co-founder of I.C.I. had had his way Britain — and presumably Ireland — would have known the horrors of Prohibition.

When the Defence of the Realm Act was debated he was against 'tinkering with the hours of opening'. He wanted pubs to be closed down altogether.

'Just think of the stimulating effect which such a great act of renunciation would have upon our allies!' he said.

Yes, just think.

One cannot but admire Alfred Mond's political philosophy. When Philip Snowden made a scathing attack on Capitalism in the House of Commons on March 20, 1926, Alfie got up and asked "Will the Hon. Member tell the House that under Socialism there would be no more syphilitic children in the world? Will he say that under a Socialist system there would be no more drunkards and offspring of drunkards?"

That is political oratory of a high level indeed. The *Daily Mail* was so impressed by the speech that it was carried in full on two successive days.

The late Signor Mussolini is on record as having said twice that Alfred Mond was a great man.

Now if only *Il Duce* and Mond were alive today there would be no nonsense of those Sicilian peasants objecting to an I.C.I. factory in their midst. They'd take their contaminated olive oil and like it.

Rumblings from America's Cow Capital

BY BILLY LEONARD

President Gerald R. Ford walked out of the Republican National Convention last month with the nomination in his pocket — and two daggers in his back. One of the daggers had been planted by his own hand — the choice of his old farm-state crony, Senator Robert Dale of Kansas, as his running mate. The other was driven in by Ronald Reagan, who had come closer than anyone in 92 years to denying nomination to an incumbent. The right-wing cowboy out of the Golden West made a stunning cameo appearance on the podium that reduced Ford's triumph to dust and left the hall wondering if it had nominated the right man. Reagan's performance pulled out all the stops. Yet it was polished and flawlessly delivered. It made Ford's later acceptance speech dull and leaden-footed.

Dole was picked in a last-ditch effort to appease the Reaganites. He is a rabid partisan and nasty in-fighter. He was Richard Nixon's man-eating Republican National Chairman and was among the last to abandon the doomed President. Nixon's name, incidentally, never surfaced at the convention. He wasn't even invited to attend the gathering — a highly-unusual action.

Sometime this month, President Ford and Jimmy Carter, his Democratic opponent, will square off in the first of a series of nationally televised debates. Domestic issues, foreign policy and the role of government in the nation will be the topics. Ford has a few things going for him in these confrontations. Unlike Carter, he is a lawyer. He also has extensive knowledge of issues based on 25 years in the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, Ford right now is a decided underdog. And already his own people are conceding the South and liberal Northeast to the man from Plains, Georgia.

One subject that will get an airing will be the emotional one of abortion but Carter opposes any constitutional amendment that would circumvent the U.S. Supreme Court ruling sanctioning it. The Republicans have written such an amendment into their party platform and it will be interesting to see if Ford will go along with that. His wife, the engaging and widely-popular Betty Ford, backs the viewpoint that a woman has a right to do what she pleases with her own body.

This position has drawn a lot of heat from the anti-abortionists, a highly vocal and well-organised minority. Their biggest champions are the Catholic bishops and old-line Catholic groupings. Yet these people never uttered a word when millions of abortions were being performed stealthily in the back alleys of the nation. And there was no protest from the Catholic hierarchy when our bombers were raining death and destruction on the civilian population of hapless Vietnam. It makes one wonder.

The Reaganites made a big deal out of ramming some praise of Alexander Solzhenitsyn into the party platform, and then boasting about it. They extolled the Russian writer as the personification of rugged individualism, personal liberty and so on. That's passing strange. Solzhenitsyn has little use for democracy. He thinks what we need here is a strong authoritarian government to keep us in line. His beef is not that Russia has tyrants — they're just not *his* kind of tyrants. He seems to prefer that earlier Russia of the Czars with its

hunger and superstitions. And with its ever-present knout to keep ignorant peasants from becoming upstarts and rebels.

One of the Republican delegates who got a lot of attention was hawk-faced Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. The 72-year-old right-winger was sporting not only an orange tint to his hair but his beautiful young wife, who is in her late 20s and has four children. To add icing to his cake, Thurmond was accompanied to the hot spots by four other young beauties. Awed by the sight, a fellow newsman commented: "That a man — at 72, he carries spares!!"

Kansas City, Missouri, where the Republican Convention was held, has been known for a long time as the "Queen of the Cow Towns". It is traversed by a body of water called Bush Creek. The creek is paved completely in concrete. Credit — or blame — for that goes to the Pendergast brothers who once ran this town as if it were their personal fiefdom. Which it was. The brothers had a construction company, and our guess is they had some left-over concrete and so they paved Bush Creek. It was the Pendergasts who put Harry Truman in as county judge, thus starting him on the road to the White House. Later, one of the Pendergast brothers went to prison but Truman, when he became President, pardoned him. There is a statue to his memory in the town today.

That's American politics, folks!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I was most interested to read in Dermot McEvoy's column that one reader believes that the *Limerick Socialist* lacks 'soul' and doesn't point out the path to 'revolution'. Why doesn't he read the *United Irishman*, *An Phoblacht*, *The Irish People* and some of the other 'revolutionary' papers? These papers will give him all the 'soul' and direction he needs. The only problem is that if he reads them all he'll be like a man at a roadside, with all roads leading to 'revolution'.

Will they ever learn?

The *Limerick Socialist* is one of the most literate papers in the country. It is a political paper, devoid of dogma, jargon and instant revolutionary formulae. That is important because the majority of the left-wing papers, plus the Sundays, plus most of the dailies are unreadable, either because they are loaded with meaningless chunks of 'revolutionary' claptrap, or because the journalists who write for them are illiterate. The *Socialist* takes a practical, pragmatic line: instead of merely borrowing into Marx and Lenin for the answers, the paper's contributors bring common sense to bear on a subject and expose the evil and corruption in Irish society. Further, the paper has wit and humanity, two commodities with which the Irish are not overburdened nowadays.

I am sure that the editor of this paper would not lay claim to any grand design. We don't have the young 'revolutionary's' instant solution and he will be further disappointed to learn that we are not even working on one. If he wants to impose a doctrinaire straitjacket on a disinterested country he should buy shares in the *United Irishman*. No, we believe a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and we've done that; not a bad step either. We have a strong base, a small dedicated group of workers and writers, a lot of supporters, a growing readership and an American and an English correspondent. How's that for the many international brotherhood of workers baby!

Too many young 'revolutionaries' get cushy jobs and join the establishment like all the rest of their ilk before them. Let us hope that our reader does not go the same 'soulful' way.

JOHN CASEY.

NEWMAN'S DIRECTIVES

The *Sunday Times*, of August 22nd carried a piece, "Tests for Teenagers in Love", a report on rules laid down by Dr. Newman for under 18's wishing to marry. These include a wait of three months from the time they approach a priest, in-depth interviews with the couples and their parents, and a report from two priests, a married man and a married woman from outside the parish on the couple. This last qualification sounds like a real nasty one, with two priests and two crawthumpers poking into the love life of two teenagers.

The *Sunday Times* ran the report without comment but its very inclusion was obviously meant to show how the Church rules the lives of Southern Irish Catholics. One can imagine the resistance a Protestant Bishop or the English civil authorities would encounter if they attempted to enforce similar regulations on English teenagers. Yet, in all probability, the Bishop's proposals, autocratic and undemocratic as they are, will meet with little or no resistance. One can praise the Bishop for interest in teenage marriages and his wish to prevent marital break-ups, but the issuing of these rules – if they are rules – cannot be countenanced. If the Bishop's words were given in the form of advice this might be acceptable, if more sensibly framed, but the dictatorial tone of the 'directives' (rules) makes them sound like *Roma locuta est*. The only thing is that many people are tired of *Roma locuta est* (Rome has spoken), not to mind *Newman locutus est*.

The idea of celibate clergymen and crawthumping holy Joes deciding whether a couple are suitable for marriage or not is preposterous. The Church has been in the marriage bed long enough, now the Bishop wants to take a further step into the back seat of the lovers' car.

It may be of interest to look at the originator of the scheme, Dr. Jeremiah Newman. Dr. Newman is the son of a rich farmer from West Limerick. In Maynooth one of the people who took a dislike to the young Jeremiah Newman was Dr. Cremin, the Kenmare-born Professor and one of the most conservative clerics in the college, well known to thousands of students over the years. It is reported that he failed Newman in an examination on a personality basis. Later Newman returned to Maynooth as sociology professor and went on to become president of the college. As a lecturer he was regarded by the students as domineering and vindictive. His elevation to the presidency is said to have disturbed Professor Cremin greatly.

Cremin believed the academic standards of the college were in jeopardy when a man of Dr. Newman's calibre, the professor of what Dr. Cremin would regard as a new-fangled discipline of dubious worth, could be appointed to the post. Dr. Cremin never took to Newman as president, maintaining only a working relationship with him. On Cremin's part there may have been an element of professional jealousy, and Newman's appointment to the see of Limerick is said to have left him in total bemusement. Cremin had earlier received another bitter blow when he failed to get the nod as the

Bishop of Kerry.

Any hopes that progressive clergymen in Limerick had that they were getting a radical or a progressive were quickly disabused. One old parish priest who had forgotten to change the name of the Bishop on the plaque in the sacristy was soundly berated and abused. There is in each sacristy a stone plaque on which the bishop's name is inscribed. This old man still had Henry, the Christian name of the late Bishop, instead of Jeremiah on the stone plaque.

But this is only as expected: the West Limerick big farmer is one of the worst of his kind: class-ridden, pompous, money-grubbing, uneducated; they tried to take the place of the Anglo-Irish gentry but without success. The gentry at least had style; the gombeen men have none. The few families of the squirearchy that remain laugh in secret contempt at the posturings of the 'bodach' farmers.

But they are not a joke; they have maintained a savage system of class distinction over the years.

For a farmer's son or daughter to marry a workman's child, except in an exceptional case, means that they break with their class and suffer the odium of the renegade. The word cottier, obsolete in some parts of the country, is still in popular usage in West Limerick.

Given this background, born into wealth, the son of a big farmer, Dr. Newman's elitism is easy to understand and, make no mistake, the Bishop's marriage directives are designed not for his own class but for the cottiers and workers of the diocese. Indeed, Dr. Newman's own sociological study of Limerick in its education, emigration and marriage tables highlights the division between rich and poor and the different life styles of the classes. The Bishop knows the score but the changes in capitalism itself are going to change the scoreboard – in spite of all the Irish Bishops.

JOHN CASEY.

The Withered Rose

In a tiny room, twelve by eight,
Amid coffee and cigarette ends
And the drip from a rusty chute,
Flame and flower came, the ancient obsolete great.

Did Grecian lovers sigh with greater pain?
Were Homer's griefs more great?
She a wanderer, I the impassioned poor;
Could this be less than Orestes' fate?

Weave a web of mystery if you
Cry your love on the street –
The only pains are heroes' pains,
Or the drunk man's staggering feet.

Tell them of some distant dream,
A hero wracked by fate.
But never betray yourself or
Mention that tiny room, just twelve by eight.

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